

the Church, and she exercises it as a good parent would in order to keep his child from evil associations, as a pious mother would to preserve the precious gift of faith which makes her child a Christian. Unfortunately many so-called Catholics refuse to heed the decisions of this tribunal which, like a light-house, gives warning of the sunken rocks upon which take place so many of the shipwrecks of virtue, morals, principles and faith. This disobedience of the command of the Church may be the first step in the pathway that leads from God; it may be the first break in the chain that binds them to the Church. Link by link that golden chain gives way, till they drift helpless wrecks upon the storm-tossed sea of religious indifference.

Let us now consider novels as the sole reading of a person. Alas, for too many do the daily newspaper and the novel form the only intellectual food. They go on from day to day, nourishing their minds with these ephemeral dreams, heedless of the duty they owe to themselves, their country and their God. Is not this the reason why we have so few Buffons, so few Websters; the reason why so few pursue a branch of study after they have left the precincts of their *Alma Mater*?

There is perhaps no pleasure obtained by reading that fills the reader with so much enthusiasm as do his first few novels. We own it is difficult to turn to the *study* of history or science when there is at hand an interesting novel, and this difficulty increases in the inverse ratio of the age; the younger the reader the greater the difficulty and *vice versa*. But let us enter upon the subject of novels as sole reading.

Occupying his thoughts with things that have no reality, dealing

with unreal causes producing ideal effects, the novel-reader becomes unpractical, his judgment becomes continually more and more stupefied, and his opinion therefore becomes worthless. Reading many things, none of which serve for ordinary purposes, no part of which he can classify for future use, he becomes unmethodical in thought. And, moreover, since the knowledge thus gained is useless for reference, he does not even attempt to memorize it. Thus, his judgment fails; order disappears from his work; and his memory becomes weak and vague. His imagination, on the contrary is stimulated and this faculty, though deserving of development in its proper proportion, predominates over the other powers of the mind. Another deplorable effect of novels as sole reading is the incessant craving for excitement which they leave. This craving often leads the young man to the public-house where he seeks to satisfy his morbid appetite for the sensational. Novels are a kind of intellectual opium. They produce most delightful sensations; they induce an insatiable longing for themselves; and they exert such an influence over their readers that many have not the strength of will necessary to break away from them.

The novel, has its use but only as a recreative agent. No one reads a novel to study any of the branches of human learning, and we urge that, as sole reading even the best novels are a great evil, the more so as all other reading becomes insipid and burdensome. All taste for history, for the study of languages, subjects proper for the perfect development of man's intelligence, becomes, as it were, buried under the insatiable desire for the excitement of the novel.